



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing Council's Committees on Legislative Oversight and Public Safety to hold hearings examining solutions to trees and other obstructions in the City's alleyways.

WHEREAS, Modern building standards and common sense indicate the necessity of maintaining multiple means of building egress in order to ensure occupants' safety in the event of an emergency. While many of Philadelphia's traditional rowhomes are not compliant in the technical sense, alleyways have traditionally served as that vital second means of egress for residents across the City; and

WHEREAS, Trees planted in alleys have caused major obstructions in alleyways in some of the City's denser rowhome blocks. A single tree can prevent clear passage for dozens of residents and, collectively, these trees pose a public safety concern for our City; and

WHEREAS, The cost of removal can often amount to several thousand dollars, a burden that many homeowners cannot bear. Furthermore, many of these trees are found in the yards of vacant homes, posing another hurdle to their removal; and

WHEREAS, Neglected and vacant properties can physically deteriorate and prevent safe passage through common rear alleys. While the City's code enforcement units are responsible for citing and ordering the remediation of dangerous structures, this same lack of access can at times prevent the City's agencies from properly documenting and addressing these issues; and

WHEREAS, When it comes to issues that affect the safety and well being of Philadelphia's residents, the City's public services are dedicated to taking the proactive rather than the reactive approach. Trees and other obstructions in the City's alleys are a matter of public safety, but one that can be solved before a tragedy occurs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes Council's Committees on Legislative Oversight and Public Safety to hold hearings examining solutions to trees and other obstructions in the City's alleyways.